

NIO/EUROPE
18 February 1986

DCI/NIO Regional Meeting--19 February 1986

1. Berlin Issues

There has been progress in the MLM arena but none on air corridors.

- MLMs. The two commands have agreed ad referendum on a way to end the post-Nicholson dispute at the local level and leave the apology/compensation issue to be worked at the political levels. Not unexpectedly the tentative agreement does not fulfill the unrealistic hopes of those who wanted absolute security for our Missions, but it does reaffirm the 1947 Huebner-Malinin agreement (which brought the missions into being), and commits both sides to instruct their troops not to use force against Mission members. It also calls for new PRA maps that will eliminate the most onerous of the current restrictions (for the Soviets the lack of freedom around Frankfurt and for the West the inclusion of major roads in PRAs). The Soviets also dropped their earlier request that the agreement pay at least lip service to the GDR's laws and customs.
- Berlin Air Corridors. In contrast, in the Berlin Air Safety Center discussions the Soviets for the first time have attributed their temporizing to the need to coordinate positions with the GDR--a development that does not bode well for the future.

2. French Elections

Although the Socialists remain almost certain to lose their absolute majority in Parliament, Mitterrand is capitalizing on the personal struggles for power between the conservative opposition leaders--Jacques Chirac, Valery Giscard d'Estaing, and Raymond Barre--and on the improved economic situation. There also appears to be as many, if not more, substantive differences within the opposition as between the opposition and the government. As a result, the Socialists are likely to garner around 30 percent of the vote on March 16th--a respectable showing--which probably would allow the Socialists to remain the largest single party in Parliament (Mitterrand's goal). In these circumstances Mitterrand would probably remain President until 1988. The most important aspect of the election may well be the confirmation of the shift of French politics from a left-right clash to a contest for the support of the broad-based center.

With the presidency remaining in Socialists hands for the next two years and the Parliament falling into conservative hands, the struggles within and between these two groups is likely to remind us more of pre-1958 France than of the stable predictable political system we have grown used to in recent years. In practical terms, French policy is unlikely to change much after March.

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